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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

Media Highlights

Anti Turkey President for EU (Cumhuriyet): Turkish media unanimously decry the EU's election of "anti-Turkey" Herman van Rompuy for its top job and wonder what it means for Turkey's EU aspirations. In a banner headline, mainstream Vatan shouts "His Only Asset is His Hostility Against Turkey" and replays van Rompuy's 2004 quip that "Turkey is not part of Europe and will never be part of Europe." Major TV channels like NTV, CNNTurk report that van Rompuy views the EU "as a Christian club with no room for a large Muslim country such as Turkey." In "Anti-Turkey President for EU," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet notes that the "Belgian PM took the EU top job with the strong support of France and Germany." Liberal Radikal headline reads, "EU Picks Anti-Turkey and Low Key President," noting, "EU leaders named Belgian PM van Rompuy, a known anti-Turkey figure, as the first EU president." Mainstream Hurriyet, in "President of the Privileged Partners," emphasizes, "EU's new leader was chosen with the support of French and German leaders who have opposed Turkish membership and called for a privileged partnership instead." Hurriyet-on-Line notes that "New EU Leaders Cold to Turkey."

IRAN: Davutoglu Left After Talking With Clinton (HaberTurk): Media outlets highlight "last minute" diplomacy effort vis-à-vis Iran by Foreign Minister Davutoglu after an extensive talk with Secretary Clinton while both were attending the swearing in ceremony in Afghanistan, ending in Davutoglu's sudden departure for Tabriz where he is expected to meet with Iranian leaders. Mainstream Hurriyet calls it a "surprise uranium visit" and expects that Davutoglu will press Iran to reverse its decision to not send its uranium to a third country. Mainstream Sabah depicts the surprise visit as "Davutoglu acts as a bridge between Iran and the West" while Islamist oriented Zaman notes "a long chat with Secretary Clinton" and concludes Turkey "once again is engaging in active diplomacy on the nuclear crisis." Mainstream Milliyet also reminds that Davutoglu expressed Turkey's willingness to continue diplomacy with Iran even after the 'storing uranium in Turkey' proposal was not accepted by Tehran. "In a complete mediator spirit, Davutoglu will do his best to convince Iran on this formula" the report adds. Zaman predicts Davutoglu will use "telephone diplomacy" from Tabriz as his visit coincides with the P5+1 meetings today in Brussels.

FBI Mueller's Press for Biometrics

Turkish commentators digest FBI Director Mueller's Ankara visit from different angles today. "70 Million People Will Be Screened" says Ibrahim Karagul in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak who is bothered by biometrics. Noting the widespread speculation that Mueller asked Turkish authorities for biometric data on the personal and private information of Turks, the writer opines that the effort is "just like the way the US is imposing on the EU." The writer hopes "Ankara will say no regardless of Washington's continuous pressure" because once the security agreement is signed between the EU and the US "Washington will turn to Ankara again for permission" and that means "70 million Turks will be treated as potential terrorists." In "Gifts Are on the Way, Vatan columnist Mustafa Mutlu sees the FBI Director's visit "as a gift-on-the-way for the ruling AKP." Based on the meetings that Mueller had, he argues "Washington seems to be working on a favor for AKP by handing over the three PKK names" which were listed as drug traffickers by the US Treasury. Yilmaz Oztuna of conservative daily Turkiye has a different take. He notes the growing visitors traffic between Ankara and Washington, including the Mueller visit, which is "setting the ground" for the upcoming Obama-Erdogan summit in Washington, DC.

Progress Towards Republic of United Cyprus

Mainstream Hurriyet reports that the parties in Cyprus are making progress in their talks for the unification of the divided island. The paper says at their 51st meeting, Turkish-Cypriot leader Talat and Greek Cypriot leader Christofias agreed to declare a news blackout until the finalization of the talks. According to diplomatic sources, if the parties reach compromise on an united Cyprus, the new cabinet will have six Greek and three Turkish

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members. Hurriyet also reports that united Cyprus will not have an army and the police force will be the only armed force on the island; that passports will be the same; and that Turkish and Greek will be accepted as official languages, among other proposals.

Hurriyet says that property issue remains the major problem at the talks and that the Greek Cypriots have "signaled to the EU that settlement was unlikely." The paper opines that the Greek Cypriot goal is to "sabotage the possible positive results of the EU summit for the assessment of Turkey on December 10-11. "

Senator Kerry Initiates Investigation into Blackwater's Middle East Arm Sales

Mainstream Hurriyet reports that the chairman of the US Foreign Relations Committee Senator John Kerry has demanded an investigation against the international security company Blackwater, saying that the company violated US laws prohibiting the sale of military technology and expertise to the foreign countries, such as Iraq. Hurriyet reports that the Committee will also look into allegations that some of these illegally imported weapons were sold to the PKK in the black market.

Upcoming events

- November 20: The 5th Turkey-Africa Congress in Istanbul
- November 23-25: PM Erdogan will visit Libya with a large delegation of ministers, parliamentarians and businessmen
- November 25: Public sector employees will go on one day strike to protest the 2.5 percent wage increase
- November 26: Turkey-EU Troika meeting in Istanbul

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Death toll in the swine flu outbreak reaches 93
- Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said a decision on the nuclear plant bids was possible before November 24
- Emine Ulker Tarhan is elected the new head of YARSAV, union of

judges and prosecutors

- Dogan Yayin holding sells 29 percent of its shares to German publisher Axel Springer

World

- Five permanent members of UN Security Council will meet in Brussels today to discuss Iran's nuclear energy

- Palestinian President Abbas said that a Middle East peace deal could not be reached before the end of his term

JEFFREY